

REACTION TO THE FRENCH COLONIZATION OF INDO-CHINA

complaint is essentially that public utility is not the yardstick of expenditures, and that the Indo-Chinese who are industrious and miserable must perforce support many purely French interests. When the colony sent money to succour the inundated regions of Southern France the gesture was not reciprocated for the devastated provinces of Nam Binh. It is a clear perversion of the colonization ideal when the benefits are unilateral and the colony must drain itself for a sovereign state that was not of its choosing.

In the Protectorate theory there is inherent the principle of a progressive native participation in the colony's government, but the protecting state is to judge what time is propitious to withdraw its guiding hand. When the French claim that the natives have neither the appropriate training or experience to direct their own destinies the Annamites complain that they have no chance of acquiring either. The education and civil liberties dispensed to the Annamites are but a caricature of their Occidental prototypes. Such native grievances and desires have been expressed in various forms, both active and literary, but never better than in the *Cahier des Voeux* presented to Varenne. In this connection it is interesting to note that the *Cahier* sent to the Minister of the Colonies in 1936 by 300 Cochin-Chinese embodies substantially the same resolutions as those presented to Varenne and Raynaud. Puerile violence is but one of the many obstacles in the way of understanding native opinion—if such a thing exists in Indo-China. One point shines clearly through the haze of uncertainty: the Annamites have definitely turned their backs on Chinese culture in favour of Western science. If France will not teach

them they will go
elsewhere to learn it.

In the new nationalism that has invaded Indo-China there are des-
tructive forces which have not yet been conjured. To
begin with,
nationalism is confined to the Annamite countries which
frankly would
treat Khmers and Laotians, not to mention the
primitive tribes, as
subject peoples. Secondly, even Annamite nationalists
cannot agree
among themselves. The leaders have shown both a
divergence in view-
point and a mutual jealousy that has undermined their
co-operation.

They can unite in disliking their subjection to the
French rule but they
cannot come to any agreement on a constructive
programme. The

younger generation of nationalists, for example, dislike
and are heartily
disliked by the older generation, which feels that it has
paid for the
privileges which the younger men are enjoying without
effort and with-
out gratitude. Fundamentally there is a lack of public
spirit in Annam